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## THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

IT is not intended in this article to indulge in any lamentations on the evils of intemperance. The sober and intelligent portion of the community is pretty well agreed on this matter, and it will here be taken for granted. But in spite of sufficient intelligence to see where the evils lie there is not so clear a judgment regarding the possible remedies for some of the evils deplored. It will be the task of the present discussion to propose and defend some method of dealing with the problem.

Many people at one time thought that prohibition, and others thought that high license, would solve the question for them. Nothing is more certain, however, than the fact that the fortunes of prohibition have declined in recent years, though the importance of the temperance problem has lost none of its interest and impressiveness. The failure of prohibition does not prove that the question is insoluble, but only calls for renewed effort in a direction that is not accessible to the influences affecting the policy of prohibition and offering more reasonable hopes of success. I cannot propose the measures I wish to discuss until I have indicated the nature of the situation which suggests them. They are the offspring of some general principles which condition them, but which are universally ignored in the attempts to deal with the problem. The measures to be proposed are simply corollaries to indisputable principles, though they do not seem to be thought of in the political and other efforts to meet the issue.

Two things have availed to suppress interest in the temperance problem. The first is the evident failure of prohibition to effect its end, and the other was the distractions of war and the financial issues of the last two Presidential campaigns. It was impossible under the last two influences that it should be otherwise. Bad as intemperance is, it must take second place in the struggle for the financial and political foundations of all social order. But the decision of the last election ought to be final in regard to financial questions, so that, even though tariff and colonial problems are still to be solved, we may bring for-

ward the issue of temperance as one whose consideration need not be further neglected. Whether any policy can be adopted that can expect to cope with the problem successfully, at least to the extent that the optimistic mind desires, may be doubted. At any rate I am not approaching it with any patent nostrum that promises miracles. If any improvement of the present situation be possible I should be satisfied. The cynic, however, will say that it is no use to try, as the matter is hopeless, and he may be right from the point of view from which he regards it, which is the existing institutions at our disposal for treating the matter. Assuming that he is right I think we can turn his conclusion into a fatal objection to democracy as a desirable form of government. I for one should not remonstrate against this conclusion if I may use it as a club to beat into the cynic's head his optimistic apathy in politics. But whether right or wrong as to practical measures in the matter, there is one thing that can be done, and this is to discuss the general principles upon which any successful temperance policy must be conducted, simply assuming that the problem of administrative government will be adequately or approximately solved.

I have alluded to the failure of prohibition to accomplish its object, not because of any malice against it as a method of restricting personal liberty, but for the purpose of remarking a certain feature of it which dooms all efforts of the kind to miscarriage. I do not deny that there may be instances in which it may have diminished intemperance. But these are not general. The main point is that the policy does not accomplish what it sets out to do, and this is to make intemperance a negligible quantity in the community. This is what must be effected before any measure can be regarded as successful. Why is it that prohibition has not effected this result, and why is it that we cannot expect it to succeed to the necessary extent?

The simple reply to this query is that the prohibitionist attacks the problem from the false point of view. *He attacks it from the standpoint of supply instead of demand.* I adopt the economic form of stating it because it is the most convenient abbreviation of the issues involved. The matter may be examined in several relations: firstly, from the conception of

responsibility for the evils of intemperance; secondly, from the conception of democratic institutions; and thirdly, from the question of administrative functions in government of any kind. I take up the first of these points of view.

The question of responsibility is the one fundamental problem in all "government," whether individual or social; that is, whether in the attainment of self-control or the control of others. I mean in this nothing more than the question of the causes of any given effect. The responsibility for intemperance means simply the original source of it. The one defect of prohibition is that it does not rightly locate the responsibility for intemperance. It attacks the saloon-keeper as the main cause of the evil. It ignores or minimizes the place that should be assigned the drunkard in the problem. Far be it from me to say that the majority of temperance agitators of the prohibition type would not admit that the primary cause is the drunkard, on the matter being put to them in this way. But whatever they admit or know when thus pressed, their policy is not formulated upon the basis of this admission. They attempt to regulate the whole matter by affecting supply, when it is the demand that is the crucial factor in the problem. I need not dwell on economic truisms here in order to make out my case. I shall assume them as admitted and understood. But I may emphasize that way of stating these truisms which brings out the effect of demand upon supply instead of the reverse.

There is an interesting fact in the economic world that conceals from us the real order of cause and effect in the relation between supply and demand. We often see an increase of supply in goods followed by an increase of consumption which is too readily interpreted as an increase of demand. This, however, is only apparent. The evidence for this is the fact that the increase of supply will not be followed by any increase of consumption unless there is a corresponding decrease of price, as is usually the case when demand remains the same and supply increases. It is the fall of price that increases the consumption and thus appears to increase demand. If this fall does not take place increase of supply has no causal influence on demand, so that it cannot in any case be assumed to be the real agency

in determining the result. Moreover, the fact also is that the demand, as a psychological agency, remains the same in all conditions. The variable factor in what passes for "demand" is the availability of the means for satisfying it. When prices fall the means for gratifying desire relatively increase. The constancy of demand, therefore, as a constitutional factor in the individual and the casual inefficiency of supply by itself shows unquestionably that the casual relation between supply and demand is exactly the reverse of what it is often assumed to be, and we have indubitable grounds for accusing prohibitionists of attempting to cure evils without attacking the causes. It is the demand that creates the supply. There would be no supply whatever but for this demand. If we had the means of absolutely removing the supply the demand could not gratify itself, but all attempts to regulate supply only divert ingenuity into methods of evading the law, while the modification of demand makes the law unnecessary. This again is, of course, a truism, but it is not sufficiently regarded in the practical measures of temperance agitators.

Starting with the maxim that it is demand that determines supply I repeat the truism that the point of view to be assumed in all temperance policies must be the limitation of the individual drinker's power. He, and not the saloon-keeper, is the free and responsible party in the first course. I do not deny that the saloon-keeper has some responsibilities in the case, but he is not the primary factor in the problem. He is to some extent the victim of the person to whom he panders and whom he in the end may victimize. He only supplies what is wanted, and would be a merchant or a grocer if his customer preferred clothes or bread to whiskey. If men really wanted something better than drink we should not be troubled with saloons. But we are in the habit of shedding our tears over the drunkard and reserving all our malice and vengeance for the poor caterer, who as often as not has no temptations in regard to drink, and who can only supply demands which he does not create. If we can establish a policy which modifies the drinker's demand or limits the availability of his means for gratifying it, we may hope to accomplish something without even attempting to reg-

ulate the action of the supplying agencies. All effective as well as rational methods of prevention in any problem of evils to be cured must strike at the primary causes. This again is a truism, and as a general principle will be admitted by many that I am here accusing of neglecting it in practice. But we have often to emphasize even truisms in order to show where there is a failure to apply them rightly, and the average temperance agitator must be accused of admitting the principle in the abstract and then wholly neglecting to apply it, as he expends all his indignation and repressive energies upon the effects instead of the causes in his problem. The same general remarks apply to the high license policy, and were it not that there are other important reasons for its adoption than the repression of intemperance it might stand condemned with prohibition. But can we propose any measures that promise more effective remedies for the evils of drink than those in vogue? I cannot answer this question until I have briefly considered the other two mentioned in connection with individual responsibility for intemperance.

What strikes the observer at first, in looking at the policy of the prohibitionist, as both important and paradoxical, is the relation between his method and his general conception of government. His decided predilections in regard to government are for Democracy, in its original and perhaps its purest form. He may not intelligently adopt this position, as it may be wholly due to the influence of tradition and habit, mingled with that pride in our institutions that is closely allied to patriotism. He simply assumes the adequacy of present institutions to meet the emergency, and is too much bent on action to stop and consider the difficulties in his path. The prohibitionist is of the Puritan type in both his moral temperament and his readiness to act. He accepts and reveres the sturdy character of our more primitive national life. He has been educated in the Puritan's ideals and possesses the Puritan's conscience. He accepts, whether by tradition or theory, the intrinsic merits of our political institutions. He does not care to reform them as institutions, though he wishes to see them better administered. He in fact conceives no better form of government as possible. What he

wants is to see the employment of all its power in the repression of intemperance, and he does not reflect that this power is derived from the very people whom he wishes reformed. The conjunction of his morals with his political theory thus becomes a curious one. He does not see that Democracy has been organized in the interest of liberty, and not of restraint. He is wholly unconscious of both the advantages and the limitations of his ideal notion of government, which was designed for the encouragement of a liberty which his own rigorous policy in drink matters seems to contradict. In spite of his earnest adhesion to democratic institutions he verges on the socialistic method in his efforts to deal with intemperance. He passionately advocates the agency of government in the attempt to cure the evils of drink and does not dream that he is enlarging the functions which he so much dreads when inveighing in the abstract against despotism. He proposes methods which, if they mean anything, design to reform a man by interfering with others whose whole conduct is determined by the character and action of the man to be reformed. It is strange thus that socialism with its enlarged government functions, though this affinity of the prohibitionist be unconscious, finds its strongest support in the men who are the most conservative of our citizens in their usual conception of politics. This is consistent enough from the standpoint of his morality. Moral earnestness and a determined inclination to be his brother's keeper have, as their most natural result, precisely this disregard of devotion to abstract political institutions, apart from the influence of mere tradition and habit. It is the improvement of the individual man that he seeks and not the formal preservation of political institutions. The latter would very quickly seem to be useless if they did not lead immediately to the welfare of their subjects. But having taken his government as a foregone conclusion and not as a question to be reopened, his supreme end is to eradicate certain moral and social evils without first reflecting upon the probable effect to change the institutions that he so much reveres. He would use any power, or set agoing any machinery at his command, for the accomplishment of his purpose. He appre-

ciates liberty only as an exemption from restraint upon conscience, and not as immunity from consequences without qualification. In fact it is liberty of conscience for which he has always stood and not liberty of will, and he balks at nothing which appear to infringe his determination to save his neighbor. Hence he does not stop to consider any consequences except the abridgment of the rights of conscience, as he does not suppose that any conscience exists in the desire and liberty to use drink. In that he may be right, in the main at least. But the right to liberty of some kind does not depend upon the possession of conscience. It depends upon the exemption of one's conduct from the charge of being anti-social, no matter what the injury to self may be. Consequently the appeal to direct government methods only exposes legitimate liberty to extinction, unless we are guaranteed rulers that respect it.

But passing this by as of secondary interest the main thought which I wish to keep in front is the prohibitionist's neglect of the conditions that are required for the success of his method, and these are the limitation of the power of the men to be reformed and the responsibility of the administrative agents of government. To expect the intemperate to reform the administration of the government which is to carry out prohibition is like asking a man to raise himself by his bootstraps. When that class holds the balance of power, as it too often does, there is little hope that the direct government agencies upon which prohibition relies will effect anything. This perhaps is again a truism, but its assertion points a moral in the direction of some other means of solving the problem.

In attempting to suggest remedial measures here I return to the question of regulating demand. Attempts to restrain the sale of liquor do not affect this demand, and some method must be devised by which either to extinguish that demand or to limit the individual drinker's means of gratifying it. This I think is quite possible. I propose, therefore, as a more practical method than mere police administration or prohibition which is a form of police agency, a more extensive application of the principle of guardianship, such as is already applied to imbeciles, insane, and incompetents generally. Provide an



adequately responsible person or body of persons who shall take the wages, income, or property of all addicted to such inebriety as deprives the family of its support and administer it in behalf of the parties concerned. If desirable in the interests of diminished government functions, the application of such a measure might be limited to cases where the family was affected. But I shall not define any special limits to the usefulness of such a policy. The one question which I have to meet is the practicability of the method proposed.

It must be conceded that the proposal at once suggests some of the difficulties that I have urged against prohibition and similar agencies. The appointment of guardians on so large a scale, and protecting the subjects of this guardianship by securing the proper responsibility of the men or agents acting as guardians, is a question of government fitness as much as the administration of prohibition. In removal of this objection, however, two things can be said. First it has the successful experience of guardianship in other matters in its favor. The objection suggested applies equally to the present system in operation which no one would abolish. Secondly, there is a perfectly feasible method of avoiding the undue appointment of guardians, so that the establishment of their responsibility might be easily affected. I shall indicate this resource in a moment. I have at present to remark that the system has the advantages of all selective processes that evade an appeal to the voter at frequent intervals. If guardians were to be selected by popular voting I should not advocate the method. Our present use of guardianship would not work successfully if the agents of it were the product of the franchise directly applied. What makes it useful and practical is the method of securing their appointment by the courts. This policy could easily be adopted in the case discussed and no objections would be relevant that would not also tell with equal force against all guardianship.

An easy way to meet all objections based upon administrative difficulties in our kind of government would be to see that the guardian was an institution organized somewhat after the type of the New York and Boston Provident Loan Association.

Such a body could be made adequately responsible and would evade the objection to the multiplication of individual guardians. I grant that there would be some exposure to embezzlement in the multiplication of individual guardians and agree to the necessity of preventing this. But I think an agency like a Provident Loan Association, or if you like the comparison with a Savings Bank better, some trust association, would offer a feasible plan for solving the problem in so far as it is solvable at all. It is not necessary to work out the organization of such an institution in detail at the present time. This duty can be left to those who can accept the general plan. If it is not desirable to attempt legislative action at first, there is a way in which practical experiment can be tried before the method is employed on a larger scale. Charity societies could organize the system on the voluntary plan and test its general merits at least for all those who are willing to accept the method in their own self-defence and the protection of their families, and the state need not be invoked until its extension to inebriates who will not voluntarily accept guardianship is shown to be practicable. The utmost development of the system can be left to experience while it begins on a voluntary basis. The main point here is to invoke precedent as the guide to a possible amelioration of the evils of intemperance instead of casting about for untried methods, or those that cannot rely upon the present machinery of government for their efficiency.

I have discussed this extension of the principle of guardianship as if it were entirely new and untried. This, however, is not the fact. It is not in fact a device of my own at all. It has been tried on a small scale, as a voluntary system, and has succeeded. I do not, therefore, have to rely upon speculative arguments for its defence. It has already the favor of practical experience and requires only to be taken up by the general public and enlarged in order to make its usefulness commensurate both with its possibilities and with the extent of the evils to be remedied. In support of the whole plan therefore I quote a report on the system which I have presented for years to my classes. This report is the discussion that took place at a Charity Organization meeting and is published in

the *Charities Review* for June, 1895. It represents the experiment of Mr. G. W. Swan, in Norwich, Connecticut. It was the application of voluntary guardianship in cases sent to jails for various derelictions involving failure to support their families. I shall permit Mr. Swan to speak for himself. His statements arose in the discussion of the subject of "married vagabonds."

"In taking up my work over eight years ago I found everything comparatively easy to dispose of except these married vagabonds, who hid behind the wife and flock of little children. I consulted the law, and found that there was plenty of law, but the application was not such as to remedy the evil. Such men are often willing to enter a jail and be well fed and kept warm, and, as a general thing, have nothing to do but read trashy literature, leaving their families to starve or be supported by towns or by benevolent people. I awoke one morning with a determination to see what I could do towards making the law a means to an end. I visited the judge of our city court and laid my plan before him. I said to him: 'I find that in your administration of justice in this court, from time to time, you suspend judgment in cases of certain men. I want these men to understand the next time they are presented to this court for non-support of their families, instead of giving them from thirty to sixty days, you will give them the full penalty of the law, and then allow me to give them an opportunity to choose between two things.'

'Go ahead,' said the judge, 'and we will see what we can accomplish.'

"The first to come up was a Scotchman. I had seen him in the prisoner's dock time and again. He had a wife and four children, was a skilled workman, and able to earn three dollars a day. He expected to get his usual thirty days. His wife would get two dollars and a half a week, in coal, and they would try to work the Charity Organization Society for some help. The man was proved guilty, and it was then the opportunity to try my experiment. I walked over to him and said: 'Dave, you are here again, and I will engage that you will get six months this time.' He changed color, as he did not like that.

"'Now,' I said, 'wouldn't you like to turn round and be a better man, support yourself respectably and take care of your family?'

"'What can a fellow do,' he asked, 'when everyone hates him?'

"'Well,' I said, 'if I will stand by and be your friend, will you do as I want you to?' He said that he would. I had had some blanks printed that read: 'Mr. ———: Please pay to G. W. Swan the money due me for wages the next six months,' or 'a year,' or 'during my employment.' I filled that out and he signed it. I presented the signed document to the judge of the court and made a plea for the suspension of judgment for sixty days. I gave a little bond for the man's appearance, and he went to work. When pay-day came I took his money; and that money did not go into the family, to be got away from the wife by threats or coaxing. I adopted the system of tickets, sending her to the grocery store, allowing a limited amount of groceries to be received—so many dollars' worth a week.

A similar arrangement was made with the butcher and with all those from whom David's necessities were bought. If something were wanted from the drygoods store a special order was given for that. We kept a strict book account, and at the end of each month we called the man in and rendered an account to him of what we had spent. That man to-day is the best man in the employ of C. F. Rogers & Co. His home at that time was anything but cheerful. The condition of affairs had made his wife a scold. There were no carpets on the floors, the furniture was broken, there was only an apology for a stove, and the equipment of the larder was mainly empty whiskey bottles. Go in to-day, and you will find five rooms nicely furnished, five children well cared for, well clothed, and four of them in school, and above all, you will find a happy wife. They attend church and the children go to Sunday-school, and the man has a snug little bank account.

"We have handled between four and five hundred such men in the last four years, and I have personally received over fifty thousand dollars of the earnings of these men, and have applied it to the needs of their families. It has been an interesting experience to step into the court room Saturday morning and see the men in line waiting for their cases to be called as the sixty days expired. If I ask for further suspension of judgment it is always granted. When a man sees the advantage of the better way of living, and applies himself to follow that way, keeping away from the saloon and caring for his family, he is again trusted with his own wages, and we have very few that lapse into their old way.

"What has been the result with regard to the dispensing of charities in the town? That is an important part. Take the report of our selectmen, and I will show you that in 1887 the amount of aid to the outside poor was almost twenty-three thousand dollars. You know what the past two or three years (1892-'95) have been—how severe the circumstances of the unemployed. All these things have been against us, but there has been a constant decrease in this direction, and two years ago it was only a trifle over ten thousand dollars, instead of twenty-three thousand."

The population of Norwich at that time was about twenty-six thousand. The extent of the work accomplished by this method of Mr. Swan is tolerably apparent to any one, and I see no obstacle to the organization of such a plan everywhere that organized charity attempts to solve the poverty problem. After the system had sufficiently proved its value the state might step in and make such guardianship imperative upon the inebriates that did not accept it voluntarily, and to escape the difficulties of multiplying guardians might see that the work was done by Provident Loan Associations.

I hardly need consider the advantages of the system after the above experiment, but I may call attention to the points which connect it with the fundamental principles of every suc-

cessful social order. First, it attacks the problem from the standpoint of personal responsibility, or the primary cause of the evil to be remedied. Secondly, it protects the liberty of those who do not abuse the propensity to strong drink. Thirdly, it enables all parties interested in temperance to unite, when they will not unite in such repressive measures as prohibition. These are three very important advantages in the system, and it is strange that the moral and religious classes that constitute the backbone of the prohibition movement, do not see that their own theory of individual responsibility for sin and vice compels them to adopt some such measure as is here advocated. Their doctrine of free will and personal responsibility is incompatible with their tendency to attribute so much wrong to the saloonkeeper and to bestow their sympathy upon the primary recreants in the evil. But not to dwell upon this point it seems fair to demand upon the basis of Mr. Swan's experience the practicability of the plan proposed, and to inoculate public opinion with the desire to try it at least. To begin its application as a department of organized charity ought to appear easily possible, and that it should thus recommend itself to the benevolent ought to appear from its capacity to invest the personal service of man which is so indispensable to the most successful charity. Once started it may easily grow into the larger application that the problem requires, and yet lose none of its capacity to promote personal service. To me it is a wonder that organized charity has not already seen the importance of Mr. Swan's work and endeavored to extend it as it deserves. It is not a new principle and for that reason ought to seem feasible and worthy of trial. The extension of a policy ought not to present serious difficulties. If the weak-minded, the insane, and the decrepit can have guardians, I do not see why the weak-willed in matters of vice and intemperance should not be classed among those demanding similar treatment. If I am right in this comparison and assumption the suggestions in this article ought to bear fruit.

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